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ABSTRACT

Computers and networks have opened new opportunities for recognition experiences in schools. Students gain the potential for increased recognition through the exchange of their writing with students in other classrooms in their own school, in other parts of the country, or in other parts of the world. Reorganizing and editing text for publication is also greatly facilitated when articles and stories are first stored on computer disks. This combination of an increased audience for student writing and the ease of revising text has substantially increased the quantity and quality of writing produced in the participating classrooms. (RS)

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Interactive Technology Laboratory

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RECOGNITION: THE ENGINE THAT DRIVES THE WRITING PROCESS

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The authors wish to thank James Levin for his many helpful suggestions during the preparation of this article. We also appreciate the willingness of Moshe Cohen, Margaret Riel, Naomi Miyake, other Intercultural Network teachers and their students in California, Alaska, Israel and Japan, to share their ideas, letters and articles with us.

Recognition: The Engine That Drives the Writing Process

People are generally motivated to write by the need to communicate with each other. Post-writing, the stage in the writing process where one's work is recognized by sharing it with others, is to a large extent what makes the effort of writing worthwhile. Post-writing experiences offer a unique opportunity for students to compare the quality and effects of their work with the efforts of others.

Recognition. In this often overlooked stage of the writing process, writing is "published" in various ways in order to entertain, inform or influence others. Post-writing activities can take the form of class books, school newspapers, displays on school or district bulletin boards, posters community markets or public buildings, or oral presentations.

Word processors often ease the organization of recognition experiences in schools. Text can be neatly printed in a standard format and multiple copies can be produced for editing, evaluation and to send home. For example, reorganizing articles into two columns for publication in a classroom newspaper can be more easily achieved once the text has been entered into the computer. Pen pal letters, articles and stories can be easily exchanged among classrooms if they are stored on disk.

Teachers with access to a modem (a device which connects a microcomputer

to the telephone system) and appropriate communication software can open a much wider audience to their student writers. By linking together computers in different places over telephone lines, students can share their ideas and writing outside the four walls of the classroom. This capability, previously too expensive for all but the largest institutions, now enables students to communicate with classrooms across town and around the world. Using local electronic "bulletin boards" or inexpensive commercial computer networks like the Source and Compuserve, teachers can easily expand the audience for their students.

The use of communication networks has been successfully integrated into classroom writing instruction. Several upper-elementary classrooms in Vista and Oceanside, California have been exchanging letters regularly with their "computer pals" at schools in Sitka and Wainwright, Alaska. These classrooms have also been participating in a "computerized newspaper" network (Mehan et al, 1985; Classroom Computer Chronicles, 1984). Students wrote articles on the computer and exchanged text files with other participating schools. Each school produced its own local edition of the Classroom Computer Chronicles which generally included both stories written locally and those by students from distant sites.

The following examples were selected from letters and articles written on the computer by grade 5-8 children in Alaska and California (Levin et al, 1984). They were exchanged over the Source communication network using a Hayes modem (300 baud), an Apple II computer and the Network Tool communications software (InterLearn Inc). (Note: Some teachers simply exchanged disks through the mail.)

Dear Computer Pal,

My teacher said we could write computer letters. I thought it was neat. I am in the seventh grade and have never been away from the north slope of Alaska. We go to fish camp every year and whale hunting in the Spring. I love to hunt and fish. Do you like to go hunting? Write soon.

Your Friend,
Alfred
Wainwright, Alaska

Dear Computer Pal,

I am in Mr. Vancil's 5th grade class here in Wainwright. It is very cold outside today. Our temperature is 14 degrees below zero. What is it like in your town? The sun went down on November 18 and will not be back until January 24. It is like night all day long. Today our janitor shot a rabid white fox on our back steps. I'm glad we were not out at resess.

We like to eat muktuk and frozen fish. We also like warmed caribou blood to drink. Muktuk is whale skin. To us it tastes good. We had a feast at the high school on Thanksgiving. We had duck soup, caribou soup, frozen fish and muktuk. What did you eat?

Well I don't have anything else to say. Write to me on this computer. Mr. Vancil says he will help me read your letter.

Good-by,
Fritz
Wainwright, Alaska

Dear Computer Pal,

My name is Micah. I like to play football. I play offensive tackle and defensive end. Whats your sport? My house address is _____. I do not live in a two story house. I have a jacuzzi but not a pool. Do you live in a two story house? Do you have a jacuzzi or a pool? We have six people in my family. How many people do you have? Will I have to go now.

Your Friend,
Micah

Cutting Ice

At about the middle of October, everyone goes out of town one mile to the ice pond to cut ice. To cut the ice you have to take a big saw and cut the ice. After you have about 5-6 pieces, you load them onto your sled, take them home and put them in your ice cellar for summer. An ice cellar is like an underground shack. Here in Wainwright there is a permafrost in the dirt so the ice cellar keeps the ice frozen all summer.

Ward
Alak High School
Wainwright, Alaska

Dear Charlene,

My name is Armando and I'm 11 years old. I am in the fifth grade and am a boy. I'm in Tell Me How the Sun Rose. I'm part Mexican and part American. What are you? Do you ever think Sitka will sink? Does it feel nice living on an island? Do you have a pet? Do you have a brother or sister? What school do you go to? What grade are you in? What is your teacher's name? How old are you? Do you have lots of friends? Do you do lots of work? Have you seen the movie E.T.? Do you like being a pen pal with a boy? Where were you born? Do you like books? Please write to me soon.

Your Friend,
Armando
Olive School,
Vista, California

Weather

The weather here in Oceanside has been extremely warm and sunny!!!!! In the morning it is usually cold and foggy but it wears off in the afternoon. It has been sunny and fair with clouds. Mostly nice to swim and go to the park. You can't dress heavy.

Joanne and Jeff
Garrison School,
Oceanside, California

Teachers reported a significant increase in the quantity and quality of text produced by these 10-14 year old students. Improved writing skills were in large part attributed to student access to wider audiences and the ease of editing and communication offered by the computer. Gaining

recognition for one's writing by having it included in a distant school newspaper was a strong motivation for many reluctant writers.

Writing With a Purpose. At the University of California, San Diego, a project called the Intercultural Network is currently underway. The goal of the Project is to enable secondary students to cooperatively address questions related to the social sciences. Eventually, three overseas secondary schools will be networked with three schools in the United States. A local University in each country or state will offer a course for University students interested in social science education. These students will organize "projects" which will be reviewed by participating classroom teachers and be broadcast over the Network. Secondary students will then collect and analyze the local data and report their results over the Network as a recognition activity. The activity is being coordinated by Margaret Riel at UCSD and is partially supported by the Apple Educational Foundation.

During a feasibility study this year, college students in Japan, Israel and the United States, explored the following social science issues:

1. Comparative analysis of the three educational systems.

2. Analysis of cross-cultural and cross-generational occupations and career aspirations.

3. Analysis of variations in news coverage and advertising.

Students learned first-hand about each others' cultures and developed an

appreciation of some of the difficulties associated with conducting social science research. The following letters were exchanged among students in James Levin's class in San Diego, Naomi Miyake's class in Tokyo and Moshe Cohen's class in Jerusalem. The communication was in English since the college students in Japan and Israel were also learning English as a foreign language. (Note: When secondary students begin exchanging messages, translation will be accomplished on the receiving end by bilingual classmates.)

Greetings from San Diego, California

My name is Karla and I'm working on this letter to you with my classmate Denise. We are both Communication majors here at UCSD. The reason we are taking this computer class is to learn how to use these amazing machines, and how to deal with frustration!

It seems really werid to be able to send mail to someone in Japan. I hope there is no problem translating, I know how confusing it gets because I learned how to speak and write French a few years ago. Unfortunately I don't know Japanese, but I would be interested in learning a few words that you think might be useful in communicating with someone Japanese. I'm sure Karla and I could teach you a few words too!!!tee hee hee!!!

There is a TGIF today so Karla and I will drink a beer or two for you and dance a few songs. Write to you again soon.

Denise and Karla

To Denise and Karla,

Ny name is Taku, Naomi's assistant. I am a student of the faculty of education of Tokyo University.

Most of our class are not good at English, but all of us want to be good. We are interested in English, education of English (or foreign language) and intercultural communication.

What does "tee hee hee" mean? In what situation do you use this phrase?

Taku

Chika and Mika

Glad to hear from you. Hope your vacation was enjoyable. By the way, what holiday were you observing?

San Diego is probably not as big as Tokyo but about 130 miles up the coast is a very large city, Los Angeles. San Diego is a pleasent place to live. It has good weather, beaches and there's a lot of great things to do here. And recently out baseball team the Padres won the National League Championship and went on to the World Series but lost to the Detroit Tigers. The National League Series was very exciting and caused a huge commotion all over the place. It was to put it lightly rather "crazy" around here. Are you interested in baseball?

Tomorrow is Saturday and I plan to have a fun weekend. Hopefully I'll make it to the beach. How are the beaches around Tokyo? Do you go often? I live about a block from the beach and enjoy running along the shore in the afternoons and watching the surfers along my route. It is nice here today but is has to cool off a bit and that signals the end of summer around here. How sad.

Will it has been nice rambling with you and look forward to hearing from you again soon. By the way call me "Rob," it is a lot easier to remember.

Have a good one,
Rob

Dear Rob,

Hello!! Today we want to introduce our new friend, Mihoko. She is nice girl like us. Ha-Ha (This is Japanese smile)

Your story is very interesting. It's too bad that your Padres lost. In Japan case, recently Hiroshima Carp team won the Japanese Series. Chika likes this team, but Mihoko likes this rival team, Giants. And Mika is not interested in baseball at all. Now she is going to be fan of Carp!

By the way, you seem to enjoy beach side. But Tokyo's sea is not clean, so we don't often enjoy there. Most students enjoy dancing at disco. We envy you to play under the sun.

In Japan November is school festival season. Next time, we want to write to you about it.

Good-bye
Mika, Mihoko, Chika

Attention : Kris and Jim - Jim Levin's computer.

Hello San Diego, this is Nurit from Jerusalem. I'm a student at Moshe Cohen's class. Before I'll tell you about myself I would like to inform you that my English spelling is'nt so good there fore you must forgive my mistakes - thank you. This is my third (3) year and last one for the B.A in Psychology Education and History of Art.

Originally, I'm from Kibbutz in the north and this is the place where I go every weekend - it's a lovely place-beautiful nature, consider as on of the hootest place in the country, but fine with me. As a matter of fact, I think it's very simler to the weather in your state. I was in U.S.A in 1979 and I also visited San Diego, which I consider as a very nice place. I would like to come again one of this days, first because I've many friends there, and secondly maybe for continue my studying. Have you ever been in Israel? I believe you would be intrested to here about Israel since you study about the Middle East. Well, here is a very unique way to do it - through the computer ..... If you have any question you are welcome to ask. I must go now, I'll write soon as I receive your letter. Minwhile, have a nice weekend.

Shalom, Nurit.

These introductory exchanges will be followed with a locally produced directory of secondary school biographies and more systematic social science projects involving career aspirations, musical interests and comparative journalism. Additional domestic and international sites are expected to join the network during the next year.

Some Suggested Classroom Activities

Many writing activities designed for paper and pen technology can be successfully implemented on the computer. You can adapt many of your own successful language arts experiences for use with a word processor as well. The following are examples of activities which exploit the potential of recognition experiences for grade 4-8 students.

- Have students write a progressive story where one student begins the story, saves it on disk; the next student adds to it and saves it; continue the process until all students have made a contribution.

- Write a file for each student (or group) asking a humorous question or riddle for each student to answer. Post the results on the bulletin board under the heading "Did You Know?"

- Write a classroom newspaper and share it with other classes/schools.

- Write journal entries on the computer. Instead of writing in a diary "book," each student keeps a "journal file" on disk. Make time for students who wish to share their thoughts.

- Write Diamante, Limerick, Cinquain, Haiku, free-form and other poems. Have students illustrate their poems and make a bulletin board for displaying the results. A local shopping center or bank may display the students' work.

- Use one disk as a "Classroom Message Pad" to leave reminders, announcements, and exchange ideas among you and your students. Name the files by date (eg., 12FEB.PAD) so the student can easily check for messages from time to time during the day.

- Make a "Class Encyclopedia Disk" to which students add articles on topics of interest throughout the year.

- Maintain a "Class History Time Line" of significant events throughout

the school year. Enter at least one item each day.

- Make a class dictionary compiled for general use which includes all the vocabulary and spelling words with definitions learned throughout the year.

- Write riddles to be solved. Have the students enter answers and enter their own riddles.

- Write beginnings of stories and have each student finish them in a different way.

- Write endings of stories and have students write different beginnings.

- Correspond with other classrooms by writing "computer pal" letters. Exchange disks with the other teachers through the mail or exchange text files using a modem over telephone lines.

- Begin an advice column in which individuals or groups of students write problems and questions for another group (or class) to answer.

- Write book reviews and book reports. Make a bulletin board display to highlight well liked books.

- Create a class "Disk Book" using students' work throughout the

year which must be read from "file to file" instead of "chapter to chapter."

- Write various types of letters (friendly, business, complaint, thank you, request) to respond to actual classroom occurrences (eg., complaint to a publisher about an error in a class textbook or a get well letter to a sick student or teacher).

- Design personalized holiday greeting cards or stationary. Write personalized holiday greetings or a personal New Year letter detailing the major events in each students life over the past year.

Summary. Computers and networks have opened new opportunities for recognition experiences in schools. Students gain the potential for increased recognition through the exchange of their writing with other classrooms. Reorganizing and editing text for publication is also greatly facilitated when articles and stories are first stored on computer disks. This combination of an increased audience for student writing and the ease of revising text has substantially increased quantity and quality of writing produced in the participating classrooms.

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